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ABSTRACT

A consortium for the purpose of collaboratively designing and facilitating the implementation of inservice education for teachers of young children and their supporting staff was instituted in the Florida Panhandle. Participating in this group collaboration were three teacher centers, three universities, two individual school districts, and the Florida Department of Education. Impetus for the development of the consortium was provided by four major objectives: (1) recognized need to comprehensively address inservice education; (2) commitment to the principle that collaboration provides the most promising avenue for improvement of teacher education; (3) concern for implementation of inservice education for teachers of young children; and (4) concurrence with the position of the Florida Board of Regents requiring that universities allocate increased resources to inservice education. This document provides a description of the development of the program, stated goals, personnel, budgeting, and an evaluation of results. (JD)

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SUMMARY

The Florida Panhandle Early Childhood Consortium was instituted for the purpose of collaboratively designing and facilitating the implementation of inservice education for teachers of young children, and their administrative, ancillary and auxillary staffs within nine Northwest Florida School Districts. Three teacher education centers, three universities, two individual school districts, and The Florida Department of Education constituted the membership of the Consortium.

Several influences provided impetus for development of the Consortium: (1) recognized need to comprehensively address inservice education, (2) commitment to the principle that collaboration provides the most promising avenue for the improvement of teacher education, (3) concern for the positive implementation of Public Education Act of 1975, mandating inservice education for teachers of young children, and (4) concurrence with the position of the Florida Board of Regents requiring that Universities allocate increased resources to inservice education.

The collaborative effort commenced in January, 1976. A set of charges which guided the work of the Consortium resulted in the production of a Phase I report in June, 1976. Phase II work began in August with a new set of charges.

Two groups functioned within the Consortium; a Steering Committee composed of inservice education decision makers, and a Study Work Task Force made up of an early childhood leader from each participating unit. The Steering Committee provided direction and logistical support; the Task Force developed strategies and plans for inservice education which represent initial steps toward the development of a field-based inservice certification program.

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A. Description and Development of the Program

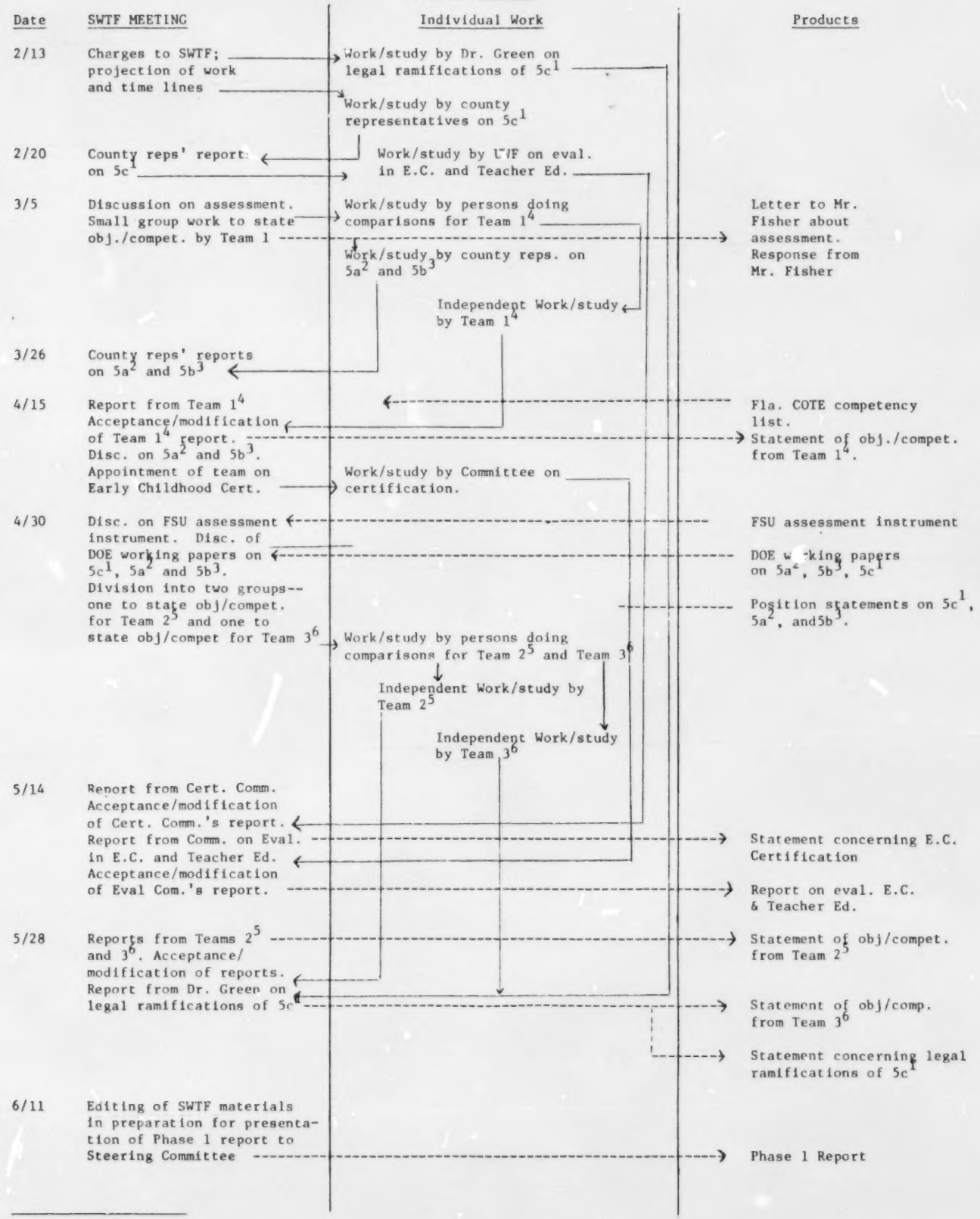
Separate as well as combined functions of a Steering Committee and a Study Work Task Force were essential to the collaborative effort of the Florida Panhandle Early Childhood Education Consortium. The work of the ten member Steering Committee was coordinated through the Teacher Education Center office of The University of West Florida with meetings arranged bi-monthly or on a need basis. The Steering Committee addressed its charges and accomplished each of them through shared decision making.

The fifteen member Study Work Task Force was responsible for fulfilling the charges developed by the Steering Committee. The work of the Task Force developed in a three phase sequence: (1) sharing information concerning inservice plans that counties had mounted through individual inservice programs, (2) Identification and selection of core competencies in each of the three inservice need areas designated in the law, and (3) the writing of inservice components designed to develop the competencies selected. The project calendar is presented in Figure 1.

The task force shared information concerning the status of each district's efforts in relation to the areas of inservice education as mandated in the Florida Public Education Act of 1975. Those areas were diagnostic teaching in language and mathematics, and the teacher's use of aides, paraprofessionals, and volunteers. Common goals and needs became apparent through sharing. For example, one concern which was regularly discussed related to the need for systematic and reliable means of identifying inservice teacher needs. In related discussions, Task Force members, without exception, expressed a sense of urgency concerning the development of systems of evaluation which would account for the individual teacher's

FIGURE 1

PROJECT CALENDAR


Date
SWTF MEETING
Individual Work
Products
2/13
Charges to SWTF; projection of work and time lines
Work/study by Dr. Green on legal ramifications of 5c[1]
Work/study by county representatives on 5c[1]
2/20
County reps' reports on 5c[1]
Work/study by UWF on eval. in E.C. and Teacher Ed.
3/5
Discussion on assessment. Small group work to state obj./compet. by Team 1
Work/study by persons doing comparisons for Team 1[4]
Letter to Mr. Fisher about assessment. Response from Mr. Fisher
Work/study by county reps. on 5a[2] and 5b[3]
Independent Work/study by Team 1[4]
3/26
County reps' reports on 5a[2] and 5b[3]
4/15
Report from Team 1[4]
Acceptance/modification of Team 1[4] report.
Disc. on 5a[2] and 5b[3].
Appointment of team on Early Childhood Cert.
Work/study by Committee on certification.
Fla. COTE competency list.
Statement of obj./compet. from Team 1[4].
4/30
Disc. on FSU assessment instrument. Disc. of DOE working papers on 5c[1], 5a[2] and 5b[3].
Division into two groups--one to state obj/compet. for Team 2[5] and one to state obj/compet for Team 3[6]
Work/study by persons doing comparisons for Team 2[5] and Team 3[6]
Independent Work/study by Team 2[5]
Independent Work/study by Team 3[6]
FSU assessment instrument
DOE working papers on 5a[2], 5b[3], 5c[1]
Position statements on 5c[1], 5a[2], and5b[3].
5/14
Report from Cert. Comm. Acceptance/modification of Cert. Comm.'s report.
Report from Comm. on Eval. in E.C. and Teacher Ed. Acceptance/modification of Eval Com.'s report.
Statement concerning E.C. Certification
Report on eval. E.C. & Teacher Ed.
5/28
Reports from Teams 2[5] and 3[6]. Acceptance/modification of reports.
Report from Dr. Green on legal ramifications of 5c[1]
Statement of obj/compet. from Team 2[5]
Statement of obj/comp. from Team 3[6]
Statement concerning legal ramifications of 5c[1]
6/11
Editing of SWTF materials in preparation for presentation of Phase 1 report to Steering Committee
Phase 1 Report

[1] 5c refers to teachers' utilization of aides
[2] 5a refers to teachers' recognition of language arts and computational needs
[3] 5b refers to teachers' application of prescriptive techniques in meeting above needs
[4] Team 1 - work on teachers' utilization of aides
[5] Team 2 - work on teachers' recognition of language arts needs and application of prescriptive techniques
[6] Team 3 - work on teachers' recognition of computational needs and application of prescriptive techniques

existing competencies. The development of specific plans for evaluation was projected as a major thrust for Phase II of the Study Work Task Force (Phase II began in August, 1976).

The second segment of the work was the study which led to the selection of competencies in each of the three inservice areas. Three task groups undertook the actual statement of competencies. It should be noted that no attempt was made in this initial work on competencies to include all possibilities. The identification of competencies provided the basis upon which inservice components were developed. This activity also constituted an important preliminary step in the development of a field-based certification plan which is projected as a major thrust of on-going collaborative efforts.

In the third phase of the Task Force involvement, two specific types of activities progressed simultaneously: (1) the consideration and study of a range of issues including the teacher's legal responsibility when working with volunteers, and (2) the development of inservice components.

B. Objectives and Goals

The Consortium body set for its own direction the following general objectives:

1. Address the requirements for inservice education as set forth in the Early Childhood section of the Florida Public Education Act of 1975.
2. Create long term alliances among those agencies and institutions which hold vested interest in the inservice education of teachers in order to maximize the efforts of each through pooling of monies, facilities, and human resources.

3. Provide a vehicle through which teacher preparation is implemented as a continuum of experiences which are initiated at the preservice level and extended through the provision of effective inservice education.
4. Develop a framework within which agency and institutional representatives who hold divergent responsibilities collaborate fully in the development of an inservice, field-based plan for certification in early childhood education.

The objectives and the progress of the consortium have been shared with faculty and administrators of universities, teacher education centers, advisory councils, and regional and state teacher education groups. The broader impact of the collaborative effort reported by the representative of the Florida Department of Education follows:

> (1) An increase in calls to the Department of Education for technical assistance from Panhandle school districts, (2) an improvement in Department of Education and school district working relationships; that is to say, rapport has increased, (3) an improvement in the quantity and quality of the master inservice teacher education plans and implementation, (4) an improvement in the quality of the planning and implementation of the Early Childhood Education Act, (5) an improvement in the components of the districts' comprehensive education plans directly related to the charges of the Study Work Task Force, (6) an improvement in the cooperation among involved districts, universities, community colleges, and the Department of Education.

C. Personnel

The Consortium body which was interinstitutional included representation from The University of West Florida, Florida State University, Florida A & M University, Bay County Teacher Education Center, Okaloosa County

Teacher Education Center, Panhandle Area Educational Cooperative Teacher Education Center (Jackson, Holmes, Washington, Liberty and Gulf County Districts), Escambia County School District, Santa Rosa County School District, and the Florida Department of Education. A salient feature which characterized the Consortium membership was the range of experiences and the breadth of perspective of the participants. The roles included teachers of young children, administrators and supervisors of early childhood programs, coordinators of special projects, university early childhood faculty and Department of Education personnel.

D. Budget

Monies available for budgetary purposes were accrued through the T.E.C. funding formula of the Florida Department of Education except for those monies coming from the two individual school districts.

Source	Value or Amount
Okaloosa County Teacher Education Center	
20 days of UWF faculty involvement valued @	$ 3,650.00
Bay County Teacher Education Center	
20 days of UWF faculty involvement valued @	3,650.00
P.A.E.C. Teacher Education Center	
20 days of F.S.U./F.A.M.U. faculty involvement valued @	4,400.00
Escambia County School District	2,500.00
Santa Rosa County School District	2,500.00
Total Budget	$16,700.00

E. Contributions to the Improvement of Teacher Education

Selected excerpts from statements made by Consortium members, we believe, best document that collaboration did in fact occur, that the objectives were met, and that the outcomes were positive in nature.

> I feel collaboration is THE way for us to approach our common problems. It (collaboration) represented a truly combined effort of separate and independent institutions and agencies to plan, design, and create a program of teacher education.

> The Phase I Report will be useful: (a) in planning, developing, and implementing inservice teacher education programs, (b) in evaluation of teacher education programs, (c) as a basis for requesting additional support, whether personnel, technical assistance, or financial assistance, (d) as a basis of expressing district concerns to the state legislature and the Department of Education, (e) as a basis for making recommendations to the State Legislature and the Department of Education, for example, in the area of certification.

F. Evaluation

To document the effectiveness of the collaborative effort two types of data were considered (1) the attitudes and the processes which enabled the consortium to move through the stage of cooperation into full collaboration, and (2) the products and/or results which may be attributed to the collaborative effort.

Selected responses of participants which were presented under Objectives and Goals provide tentative data which support the positiveness of the collaborative effort. We believe that problems in inservice education in the Florida Panhandle have been effectively addressed through collaboration. Therefore, we recommend this process as one which holds promise for other institutions with similar concerns.

M E M O R A N D U M
November 15, 1976

TO: Distinguished Achievement Awards Program,
American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
1 Dupont Circle, Suite 610
Washington, D. C. 20036

FROM: Dr. Billy J. Williams
Associate Vice President for Teacher Education
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SUBJECT: Distinguished Achievement Awards Program

Application for the Distinguished Achievement Awards Program is hereby submitted by the Florida Panhandle Early Childhood Education Consortium.

BJW/JMM/GLT/GEE:ls
Enclosure